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# Message Text

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ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CA-01
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8081
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 0601

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF AG SS
SUBJECT: SAHARA REFUGEES: SITUATION AT TIME OF UNHCR'S
VISIT TO WASHINGTON

REF: STATE 027988; ALGIERS 363; 77 ALGIERS 2775; 77 ALGIERS
1848; 77 ALGIERS 1507; 77 ALGIERS 1180; 77 STATE 137971
77 STATE 183005 (ALL EXCEPT ALGIERS 363 NOTAL)

1. IN CONNECTION WITH UNHCR POUL HARTLING'S CALLS AT DEPT
LATER THIS MONTH, FOLLOWING IS UPDATE OF SAHARAOUI REFUGEE
SITUATION REQUESTED STATE 027988.

2. INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO SAHRAOUIS: SINCE
GOA LAUNCHED ITS APPEAL FOR AID TO SAHRAOUI REFUGEES FOLLOWING
MOROCCAN-MAURITANIAN TAKEOVER OF SAHARA, VARIOUS NATIONS AND
INSTITUTIONS HAVE BECOME INVOLVED. SOME, NOTABLY SCANDINAVIANS
AND DUTCH, HAVE MADE CONTRIBUTIONS MORE OR LESS REGULARLY, AND
UNHCR HAS BEEN SEIZED OF MATTER SINCE 1976. LATTER ORGANIZATION
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LAUNCHED INTERNATIONAL APPEAL FOR DOLS 100 MILLION IN FALL OF
1976, AND WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE
DOLS 5 MILLION OF THIS AMOUNT IN COMMODITIES. FOR ITS PART, U.S.
HAS CONTRIBUTED DOLS 100,000 TO AN EARLY APPEAL BY ICRC, AND
HAS BEEN CONTEMPLATING FURTHER CONTRIBUTION ONCE DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN GOA, UNHCR, AND WFP RESOLVED.

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3. PROBLEMS: SINCE HIS ARRIVAL HERE IN 1976, UNHCR REPRESENTA-
TIVE GHASSAN ARNAOUT HAS HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY IN DEALING WITH
ALGERIANS ON SAHAROUI REFUGEE QUESTION. BASIC PROBLEM IS THAT
ALGERIANS WISH TO HOLD FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN ADMINISTRATION OF
REFUGEE AID TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM, WHEREAS UNHCR AND OTHER AGENCIES
ANXIOUS TO SUPERVISE USE OF AID THEY FURNISH AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE.
FOLLOWING ARE MAJOR DIFFICULTIES ARNAOUT HAS FACED:

A. UNHCR REPRESENTATION IN TINDOUF: ALGERIANS HAVE REFUSED
TO ALLOW A UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE TO BE ASSIGNED TO TINDOUF ON
PERMANENT BASIS. WITHOUT SUCH A PRESENCE, UNHCR DOES NOT FEEL
IT IS DOING ITS JOB PROPERLY. HOWEVER,ALGERIAN CIVIL AUTHORITIES
PROFESS THEMSELVES POWERLESS TO CHANGE ARMY'S OPPOSITION TO TINDOUF
REPRESNETATION, AND RECENTLY RECENTLY REQUESTED ARNAOUT, "AS A
FRIEND,"
NOT TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH THEM FURTHER. IMPASSE HERE SEEMS TOTAL.

B. WFP CONTRACT: ALGERIANS OBJECT TO WFP CONTRACT BECAUSE
OF LATTER'S INSISTENCE THAT IT BE SIGNED WITH GOA RATHER THAN
SAHAROUI RED CRESCENT AND BECAUSE IT TOO REQUIRES INTERNATIONAL
TECHNICAL REPRESENTATION ON THE SPOT IN TINDOUF. THERE IS NO
SIGN OF A BREAK IN THE DEADLOCK ON THIS QUESTION, ALTHOUGH
ARNAOUT BELIEVES THERE IS MORE FLEXIBILITY HERE THAN ON TINDOUF
REPRESENTATION ISSUE.

C. SAHRAOUI CENSUS: DESPITE UNSYG WALDHEIM'S REQUEST TO
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FORMER UNHCR THAT UNHCR CONDUCT CENSUS OF SAHRAOUI REFUGEES,
ALGERIANS HAVE SHOWN NO ENTHUSIASM FOR THIS PROJECT. ARNAOUT
BELIEVES IT UNLIKELY THAT CENSUS WILL EVER BE CONDUCTED.

D. INADEQUATE ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES: UNHCR IS SERIOUSLY
EXERCISED AT FAILURE OF GOA AND ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT TO PROVIDE
ADEQUATE ACCOUNTING FOR COMMODITIES RECEIVED FROM UNHCR AND OTHER
ORGANIZATIONS. ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT HAS NOT YET PROVIDED MORE
COMPLETE DATA REQUESTED BY UNHCR.

E. REUNITING FAMILIES: ALGERIANS HAVE SHOWN NO INTEREST IN
ANY SORT OF RESPONSE TO APPEAL BY CERTAIN SAHRAOUI FAMILIES LIVING
IN MOROCCAN SAHARA TO PERMIT THEIR REFUGEE KIN TO RETURN TO WESTERN
SAHARA. UNHCR HAS ASKED FOR MORE POSITIVE GOA ATTITUDE ON THIS
POINT.

4. HARTLING'S POSITION: DESPITE ARNAOUT'S RECOMMENDATION THAT
HE BE WITHDRAWN FROM ALGIERS UNTIL AT LEAST FIRST TWO OF FOREGOING
PROBLEMS RESOLVED (ALGIERS 363), HARTLING IS SAID TO BE PROCEEDING
CAUTIOUSLY. UNHCR IS APPARENTLY ANXIOUS TO AVOID MAKING IT APPEAR
THAT HE IS SHUTTING DOOR ON ALGERIANS AND SAHRAOUI PROBLEM WITHOUT
FIRST STUDYING MATTER AT SOME LENGTH.

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5. RECOMMENDATION: WE AGREE WITH ARNAOUT THAT GOA HAS ACCORDED ABSOLUTE PRIORITY TO THE MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC ASPECTS OF THE SAHARA PROBLEM, AND HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATIONS TAKE A DISTANT SECOND PLACE TO THE CONDUCT OF THE WAR. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, THIS MEANS THAT THE WFP AGREEMENT IS UNLIKELY TO BE SIGNED SOON AND THAT INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN WORKERS WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE STATIONED IN THE TINDOUF REGION. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCESN WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL:

A. TO TELL THE HIGH COMMISSIONER THAT WE CANNOT RESPOND TO HIS ORGANIZATION'S APPEAL UNTIL SOLUTIONS FOUND TO SOME OF PROBLEMS MENTIONED ABOVE.

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B. TO INQUIRE WHAT HE SEES AS THE HIGH COMMISSIONS'S FUTURE ROLE IN THE SAHRAOUI RELIEF EFFORT.HAYNES

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# Message Attributes

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